

# The Classical Bulletin

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No. 7

## The Old Order Changeth

BY NORMAN W. DEWITT

Victoria College, University of Toronto

In the older parts of Canada, as in the United States, the tax-supported high schools had been preceded by private schools for boys and the so-called Ladies' Colleges. The higher education of girls was for the greater part limited to such ornamental accomplishments as music, painting, and fancywork.

When I entered high school the pattern of public opinion that consorted with the older system still retained remnants of its vigor. Many people were dubious of the ability of girls to learn Latin or geometry and not a few doubted the propriety of it; it seemed to be unwomanly. I recall one teacher who would fling a scowling glance around the room at the opening of term and bark out: "Too many girls in this class!" Thereupon he would proceed to make a bear of himself for a few days until the more timorous of the fair sex were scared away. This behavior was tolerated by public opinion.

We used the English pronunciation, which, however, absurd it may now seem, saved a deal of time and bother at the outset. *Dux* was 'ducks' and *vis* was 'vice.' *Dies* sounded like 'die ease' and *tres* like 'trees.' *Ius* was pronounced 'juice' and *unus* like 'Eunice.' Trouble often arose over the declension of *rex*; the nominative gave no trouble; it was 'recks' and not 'rakes,' but there were always pupils who would say 'rejum' for *regum*, where the rule applied that *g* was hard except before *e* and *i*. Then the teacher would demand if the pupil "chewed jum or gum." This was a standard joke.

There was no inconsiderable body of nonsense that depended upon this style of pronunciation. It was a popular game to throw together collocations of words that meant nothing in Latin and little more in English. Here is a sample:

Is a bile heres ago,  
Fortibus es in aro.  
Nobile Thisbe forte trux.  
Vaticinum? Pes an dux.

This masterpiece was intended to read:

"I say, Billy, here's a go,  
Forty buses in a row."  
"No, Billy, this be forty trucks.  
What is in 'em? Peas and ducks."

Mnemonic jingles and devices were in vogue for both grammar and syntax. We learned, for example:

From *nemo* let me never see  
*neminis* or *nemine*.

In this the *ne* must be pronounced like 'knee.' Another favorite was:

That boy is but a stupid head  
Who always does for 'but' put *sed*.

Turn future by subjunctive present  
After *ne*. Forget you mustn't.

A silly symphony was composed to enable pupils to memorize the stop consonants *d, t; b, p; g, c; k, q*: *de-lirium tremens; bull pup; good cook; king, queen*. I was never able to see the practical benefit of learning this list, but the device was efficient and the absurdity of it made it stick in the memory like a burr in sheep's wool.

The exceptions to gender in the Harkness Latin Grammar we learned by brute force, and I venture to digress for a moment to record an amusing incident. One of my colleagues while on tour in Egypt was being pestered by a retinue of persistent beggars. After exercising both patience and impatience to no avail a sudden inspiration came to him. Assuming a solemn and mysterious countenance he began to recite: "Axis, buris, callis, ensis, lapis, orbis, postis, pulvis, sentis, torris, vectis." This held the beggars; they thought it to be an incantation, something they did fear and understand, and when he launched into a second list, "cadaver, iter, tuber, uber, ver, verber," they silently stole away as the Arabs do in poetry.

Reverting now from jest to earnest, the attention given to memorization was a sound element in the old education, though the stricter discipline then in vogue tempted many to overstrain its usefulness. During the early high-school years the memory is at its best and the power of reasoning less developed. The habits of the mind should be diligently observed and utilized. To illustrate: the majority of things we see are not observed singly but as parts of complexes, the houses in the block, the articles of furniture in the house, the clothes in the closet, the dishes on the table. What a start it would give us to see a table set only with sugarbowls! Corresponding to all this is a law of the memory, which records and stores its contents in associated groups. Saucers remind us of cups, cups of coffee-pots, coffee of toast, and so on.

How apply this to Latin? Let words, so far as possible, be presented in clusters. Clusters are characteristic of Latin. They once flourished in English, but we have lost the feeling for them. For example, it is doubtful whether it occurs to anyone nowadays that the following words are all of a family: snout, snooty, snore, snort, snooze, sneeze, sneer, snivel, and snicker. This is a dead cluster. Yet in Latin the compounds of *duco*, *cedo* and other common verbs may be made into living clusters and should be presented together, like the Dionne quintuplets, even to young pupils. When the stage of deponents is reached it may be noted that *congregior* is one of a family of nineteen compounds, the largest multiple birth of the kind that I have noted. More usefulness attaches to them because their progeny in English is numerous and active: congress, egress, progress, aggression, progressive, retrogressive, and so on. Thus, even

if pupils never learn to read Latin, they may have learned how word-formation operated. This in itself is a worthwhile achievement. To have gleaned some knowledge of how a language works or operates is of more value than to have merely learned a few isolated names of things.

In the middle of my high-school studies the fiat went forth that the English method of pronunciation should be abandoned for the so-called continental system. So long as we had pronounced the names of Cicero and Scipio as in English the fact that Latin was a foreign language had hardly come home to us; it seemed to be an integral part of our educational set-up. Yet this innocent illusion vanished quickly when we began to say 'Kikero' and 'Skipio.' I can recall the older people shaking their heads and lamenting the irreparable damage to education at large when the Latin of the schools should have been divorced, not only from the Latin of the lawyers, but also from that of all learned men of English literature, who had nonchalantly mispronounced their classics for century after century. "What would happen," one man demanded, "if some member of the British House of Commons should rise up and in the course of a speech say 'wainy, weedy, weaky' for *veni, vidi, vici*?" This seemed to him the height of the ridiculous.

It did seem at that time ridiculous and Latin did disappear from the House of Commons and there was a distinct loss to English letters, but it was not the new pronunciation that wrought the revolution. In blissful disregard of schools, churches and government, the pattern, content, and direction of the educational programme was due to change in unison with the broad sweep of movements alien to controlling forces of the past. That awesome medley of uncoordinated forces which we call civilization, Hydra-headed and ever restless, was even then breaking open strange new frontiers of thought and behavior. From the bewilderment of this social cataclysm we have hardly yet recovered. Government, education, and religion have alike been forced to struggle for a footing that will hold firm in the new cosmos thrust into being by the modern demiurges of industry, the demons of speed, the sirens of the air, and the dionysiac powers of Hollywood.

Facts are stubborn things. The ancient domain of the classics and mathematics has been forcibly partitioned to afford living room to the natural and practical sciences, the political and social sciences, and the modern languages. Against facts it is useless to employ arguments. Between fact and argument there is no common language. A man might as well argue against fires, floods, and earthquakes, or a goddess in a temper.

So far from feeling downcast over this situation the friends of the classics ought to be happy. We cannot alter facts but we can make capital out of them. We have really more to offer than formerly. The very departments that have forced a partitionment of our students' time and our territory have greatly enriched our apparatus. The archaeologists have opened up new vistas of history. The political scientists, the economists, and the sociologists have furnished us with fresh points of view and new standards of measurement by which to analyze and appraise our ancient civilization. More good handbooks on classical antiquity are available than ever before. There is really an embarrassment of riches. It

is true that there is more competition, but this is not grounded in hostility. There is not a department that would desire classical learning to perish. We should rather look upon all these competitors as allied with us in a single serious purpose, and that, too, without forgetting that friction can arise even among allies. Yet this need not be serious if we know our own minds beforehand and know how to maintain level heads, as ancient philosophy recommended.

It was a fine feature of the old education that all students received the same basic training, but that day is gone forever. There is still a place for education based upon the classics but only alongside of other choices. To endeavor to promote one's own wares by depreciating those of competitors is never good business practice. As a principle this fact is recognized in commercial advertising. Violations of it not only incense competitors and provoke reprisals, but also alienate neutral opinion. Let us observe this code of ethics and we shall get along fairly well and perform a service. In my opinion we have little to learn from the old schoolmasters. They occupied a privileged position both inside and outside of the schools, and the more completely we can rid ourselves of the entails of this tradition the better it will be for us. There is educational value in Latin and Greek but no monopoly of it. Many have studied them without gaining culture, and many have gained culture without studying them. Facts are stubborn things and always win out in the end. To win we must work with them.

### The Institute for Classical Studies

Harvard University  
July 1 to Dec. 31, 1944

The Institute for Classical Studies counts itself fortunate to be able to report steady progress during the past half year, despite the generally adverse conditions for research of the kind we have undertaken,—a critical edition of the works of Gregory of Nyssa.

Father Anselm Strittmatter, O.S.B., of St. Anselm's Priory, Washington, D. C., has undertaken the edition of Gregory's *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* and has collated this treatise in codd. Vat. gr. 2066 and Vind. Theol. gr. 42, as well as the extensive fragments of it which appear in codd. Marc. Ven. gr. 67 and Vind. Theol. gr. 35. The Institute already has collations of this work in codd. Marc. Ven. gr. 360, Vat. gr. 825, and Oxon. Cromw. 9, and these collations have been placed at Father Strittmatter's disposal. Prof. Edmund Berry, of the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada, has also concentrated on the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* and has collated the treatise in codd. Vat. gr. 446 and Vat. gr. 448. He is at present collating the same work in cod. Vat. gr. 1433. Mr. James E. Walsh, of the Harvard Graduate School, has collated the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* in cod. Vat. gr. 401 and is now engaged in collating it in cod. Vat. gr. 1595. Mr. Walsh has also done a collation of the *De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti* in cod. Marc. Ven. gr. 67. Mr. John P. Cooke, of the University of Chicago, has checked Mr. Walsh's collation of the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* in Vat. gr. 401 and is now checking Father Strittmatter's in Vat. gr. 2066. In addition, Mr. Cooke has collated the treatise *In Ecclesiasten* in Vat. gr. 448 and has checked a previous collation of the same treatise

by Mr. John Callahan in Vat. gr. 1802. He has also collated the treatise *De Virginitate* in codd. Esc. Omega III.14, Taur. C.I.11, Bodl. Laud. 17 and Vat. gr. 401.

From the above it will be seen that our concentration has been largely on the *Vita Sanctae Macrinae* and on the *De Virginitate*. Work on these cannot be finally completed until certain other manuscript material is available from abroad, but in the meantime we hope to advance this particular work as far as the material now in our hands permits. We have not confined ourselves wholly to these two works, however. Mr. Walter Solmitz, of Harvard University, has collated a number of the smaller works contained in cod. regin. Graec. Pii II. 4: *Contra Manichaeos*, *In Suam Ordinationem*, *De Pauperibus Amandis*, *Contra Usurarios*, *Contra Fornicarios*, *De Mortuis*, *De Castigatione*, *De Infantibus Praemature Abreptis*, *In Pulcheriam*, and *In Placillam*.

It has seemed advisable to take advantage of the fairly static condition of the Institute's resources of photostatic material and to begin a catalogue of these resources. Mr. James E. Walsh, research assistant in the Institute, has undertaken this task, which has proved a considerable one, since it involves a subject as well as a master catalogue. When it is finished, the catalogue will contain a complete listing and description of the photostatic manuscripts in the Institute as well as a complete listing of every treatise contained in those manuscripts. The existence of such a catalogue will be of no little assistance in future editorial work, and the system of cataloguing which Mr. Walsh has developed is and will be of immediate practical value in rendering any specific piece of material instantly available. The catalogue is at present complete for manuscripts contained in Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the British Museum, the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, the Escorial, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Messina University, the University of Michigan, and for the *Codices Vaticani Graeci* of the Vatican.

At the end of our last report we said that we hoped soon to receive a number of photostatic reproductions of manuscripts from Spain. We are happy to report that this material arrived towards the end of July and is now available for our purposes. We are deeply obliged to Mr. John van Horne of the U. S. Embassy at Madrid for his services in this connection. We have placed a further order for photostats of manuscripts from the Escorial and the Biblioteca Nacional and hope that these, too, will come through. We have also placed an order for photostatic material from the Vatican, but have not yet had a reply from this source.

Cambridge, Mass.

WERNER JAEGER

Whatever else he may be doing, a man is not teaching if he spends the class hour in lesson-hearing. He is not teaching if he translates the next day's passage for his class. Nor is he teaching if his assignments for the next lesson consist in the Olympian command to take 'the next forty lines.' He may be proctoring the class, he may be lecturing; he is not teaching.—Carl Thayer, S.J., C.B., April 1942.

### "Let Us Appeal To Parents"

We have learned from time to time that pupils are prevented from electing Latin because some school authorities do not schedule classes in Latin, and when prospective Latinists wish to enroll, they are told that the demand is insufficient to justify the organization of such classes. In most communities it will be worth while for the teacher of Latin to keep in touch with parents who have themselves enjoyed the study of Latin and to remind them that classes will be offered if a subject is asked for by a number of students well in advance of the time that programs are made out. In the long run, intelligent and progressive parents, as well as educational experts, should have an opportunity of choosing for their children subjects that they themselves have found of value. If they have no opportunity or no disposition to say anything, the superintendent or principal who makes out the program is in danger of becoming a dictator.—*The Latin Leaflet*, University of Texas Publication, September 22, 1944.

### English Grammar and Latin

General capacity in the use of English, with the host of things this implies, socially and culturally, would be lifted if most of the responsibility for teaching English grammar were left to teachers of Latin. The numbers of these in such an event would naturally have to be augmented. Or teachers of English with firm Latin background could be assigned to Latin classes, and would soon discover that they were inculcating notions of grammatical correctness, together with practical skills in composition and speech, more quickly and unobtrusively, and therefore more pleasantly, than when they tried to teach the dry stuff that English grammar and composition can be when studied in isolation. I wish all teachers of English had heard as often as I have from students that they learned in Latin classes in the high school all the English grammar they knew.

Athens, W. Va.

A. M. WITHERS

### Pope's Iliad

I am in receipt of a forwarded communication from John A. Scott which correctly takes me to task for a carelessly worded comparison in my article on Pope's Homer which read: "Chapman boasted that he completed his version in fifteen weeks." The stress here is on *completed*; but the comparison does remain unfair. Chapman, of course, published his translation of the first five books of the *Iliad* in 1598, added seven more in the edition usually dated 1609, and issued his complete work—in places a new translation—in 1611. Thus each man devoted a decade to his work. For the significance of the changes in the three versions, and for illustration that Chapman's work was as "original" and personal as Pope's (even to making Achilles a romance figure comparable to Spenser's heroes), readers might consult Phyllis Bartlett's "Chapman's revisions of his *Iliads*," in *Journal of English Literary History*, II (1935), 92-119.

Fordham University

JAMES E. TOBIN



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## Editorial

Every teacher is able to find a suitable translation for the Latin subjunctive in any concrete context. Some teachers, however, are at a loss to know how to deal with this grammatical chameleon in their regular drilling exercises. In these rapid-fire displays the student is expected to know the forms of the paradigm up and down, now in regular series, now in answer to desultory questioning.

The success of this drilling program depends on the fact that each Latin form is given one, and only one, meaning that will not leave the student in the lurch later when he meets the particular form in some Latin author. Slight shades of meaning can be safely left to the time when the need of them becomes acute. It is enough that *dicent* is 'they will say'; 'they shall say' is a refinement that can come later.

This is all very simple; but there arise considerable difficulties when the Latin subjunctive is being drilled. *Maneant*, for instance, means 'they may stay' in one context, 'let them stay' in another. With or without *utinam*, it means 'may they stay,' while *si maneant* would be 'if they should stay.' Sometimes a conditional clause is disguised in an independent form; thus *maneas*: *cognosces* means, "Stay, and you will find out." *Volo (ut) maneas* is rendered "I want you to stay"; *cave ne maneas*: "beware of staying"; *verecor ne maneant*: "I am afraid he will stay."

Whatever comparative grammar has to say about the origin of the Latin subjunctive, the fact is that historical Latin was able by means of it to express innumerable relations of thought, and the young student must be prepared *betimes* to meet this fact. How, then, is the teacher of first or second high to render the subjunctive in his daily drilling exercise? If he assigns one clear-cut meaning to the subjunctive, how does he meet the problem presented by the variety of meanings which

this mood may convey? Some grammars refrain from assigning any meaning in their paradigms; others warn the student by the remark: "For the meanings, see Nos. 130, 131" (Sonnenschein); still others boldly single out one of the possible meanings; as, *Vocem*: "I may call."

Since our earliest impressions are the most tenacious, a student will normally, throughout his career, stick to the rendering drilled into him in first or second high. No wonder we meet with students doing college Latin who automatically jump at a *may* or *would* or *should* the moment they see a subjunctive in print. Evidently, their early training was deficient.

## The Three R's for the Bottom and the Top

By A. M. WITHERS

Concord College, Athens, West Virginia

Why the insistence year in and year out on courses in high school in the minutiae of civil government, in all the big and little things of county and state geography and history, in the shifting scenes comprehended under 'sociology'? Why the extraneous 'integrating' courses designed to cover everything under the sun, 'bar nothing'?

Tabulated knowledge swallowed whole, or varnished on, before one is hardly on the threshold of life, is notoriously evanescent. And thus, short early exposures to masses of theories, even to factual knowledge, or even to technical matters purely vocational, are of no lasting human value to the individual unequipped with fundamental preparation. With basic mental facilities, especially with a knowledge of language that will entitle to embarkation upon the multitudinous seas of mind-serving reading, the high-school student, whatever his purposes, can go far; while without this, the brief high-school years represent in the last analysis little but an interlude in lives that, intellectually considered, do not progress from a lower state to a higher.

There is no occasion to repose great faith, for example, in the elaboration of more and more machinery of instruction, in the systematic piling up of objectives, for the production of a satisfactory output of modern-foreign-language connoisseurs, as long as the linguistic underpinnings of these are left to our present average administrators and curriculum jugglers. *The all but total absence of demand for Latin in hundreds of colleges*, through lack of vision of what things in education are 'firsts,' does deadly hurt to programmes of modern-language study, in spite of all the talk of revolutionary army methods, of the inspiration and fascination in comparative literature, of culture through study of 'civilizations,' and all the rest of the paraphernalia with which many foreign-language professors try to console or delude themselves and their constituents.

College English-Composition courses can benefit but slightly those who have not made a beginning of competence in vocabulary while in the high school, and who have not had sufficient meditative contact with good writing to know what it is like. Eulogies of the great 'new' discovery, announced so frequently, that Tom and Dick can compose best on themes derived from the engrossing realities of their as yet uninspired existences,

are not convincing, for their efforts in any case are failures. These young Americans have not learned how to use their brains on matters outside their automatic, 'physio-reactive' fancies, and naturally have no words for them. They belong, unfortunately, to the expendable type that Professor I. A. Richards, from his Harvard sanctum, labors so sedulously to restore to linguistic health with his Basic English antidote. Appeasement of language poverty in the young (which amounts to closing to them the doors of the future), instead of drastic attempts to do something about it in time in the high school, including *judicial insistence on Latin for all those headed for professional careers*, will never elevate general education.

If it were not for the fact that there still exist parents who "know a hawk from a handsaw," and choice young spirits who rise above specious 'systems,' not even the small trickle now flowing into the writing field would be there, partially to redeem America in the eyes of the literary, and incidentally of the scientific world.

In the 'scientific' connection, it is regrettably noteworthy that we find few men of medicine with the particular 'three-R' element of culture necessary for writing. The majority of them did not enter sufficiently early and sufficiently seriously into the intricate business of language to cause them to feel the inclination to write; and they now pursue their calling, often it is true with marvelous efficiency and practical success, without communicating to the world their techniques, inventions, and discoveries; in other words, without realizing their maximum possibilities for service to the race. It is hardly necessary to add that the R which includes Latin has valuable collateral assets to offer to doctors and surgeons other than a strengthened English, though that is the asset that is paramount.

The Law especially believes in Latin as a relatively indispensable foundation study for distinction in English language, the primary article in the lawyer's bag of necessities. To appreciate the truth of this statement one has only to read the bulletins on premedical courses issued by universities, or a 1942 pamphlet of the Executive Committee of American Law Schools. By 'distinction' is meant here a capacity in writing and speaking far in excess of that possessed by the average legal practitioner among us. All know, of course, that for many high-school students future 'distinction' in English is out of the question; but since every student in high school, whether consciously aiming at the Law or not, will stand or fall, in the educated world's estimation, mainly in relation to the quality of his language, he should utilize everything possible toward the good-language end in the time available. Social Science, and many other divisions of knowledge, can wait. Language training cannot be deferred.

And now for a swift ascent (to justify our title) from the bottom of the educational ladder to the top; and let us say without preliminary that the three R's are as essential for college presidents and deans as for the youthful human material in their charge. With *genuinely* educated persons presiding over faculties, most of the troubles often afflicting the government of institutions will disappear. Such individuals know how to evaluate the *elements* that enter into the formation of the good

instructor, and by reason of their own intellectual stature and standing command the respect and deference of those who serve under their jurisdiction. But how many hundreds of cases there must be at any given moment in our midst of intellectually and spiritually incompetent administrators, who are enabled—by politics, business intervention, or plain Prussianism—not only to buy and sell what should be sacred educational positions, but also to hold their intellectual and spiritual betters in the hollows of their hands!

The conclusion of the whole matter is that, for all students and for all administrators, the three R's are, as the doctors say, emphatically 'indicated.'

### Caveat Emptor

By CHARLES SANFORD RAYMENT

The University of Michigan

Among our legacy of familiar Latin phrases appears the warning *Caveat emptor*. It can be reasonably inferred from Pliny's Natural History that such advice was not superfluous. In a context of technical description or scientific classification the reader comes again and again upon the term *adulterare*, which is brought in so matter-of-factly that the fraud must have been regularly practiced. Sometimes the deceit consisted in substituting an inferior species for a better, as with spelt, *alica* being adulterated with *zea* (XVIII, 11, 115) or Sicilian salt palmed off as Cyrenaic (XXXI, 7, 79) or pseudo-nard sold as genuine despite coarser, wider leaves and paler color (XII, 12, 43). A commoner practice, however, was to mix in altogether alien substances, some of which were heavier, others merely cheaper. Spices, perfumes, medical preparations, and dyes appear to have given dishonest dealers their best opportunity. Pliny sometimes does no more than mention the substitution, on other occasions quite explicitly states the tests of genuineness.

*Piper longum*, a variety of pepper, was, he says, very easily adulterated by Alexandrian mustard (XII, 7, 28); Italian pepper by juniper berries, which absorbed the flavor remarkably (XII, 7, 29); cassia, of the species *daphnitis*, by storax or very slender laurel shoots (XII, 20, 98).

Balsam was contaminated with ground-pine [distinguishable *magnitudine, inanitate, longitudine, odoris ignavia, sapore piperis*] (XII, 25, 119), or with oil from the rose, cyprus, mastic, balsam-nut, turpentine-tree, or myrtle, or with resin [the latter could be detected by burning, as it gave off a blacker flame] (XII, 25, 121); nard with a combination of its own root, to give extra weight, and cummin or litharge or antimony or cyprus bark [the genuine was recognizable by its lightness, red color, sweet smell, pleasant savor, and drying effect on the lips when tasted] (XII, 12, 43).

The flavor and color of wine were sometimes altered, Pliny tells us, by aloes (XIV, 6, 68), and subsequently he remarks that merely the names of vintage wines commanded a high price, so that less outstanding varieties were safer against adulteration (XXIII, 1, 33-34). Even cups were not always what they seemed, for other woods could be stained to resemble terebinth by sap from the walnut or wild pear (XVI, 40, 205).

Silphium was adulterated sometimes with cummin, sometimes with crushed beans (XIX, 3, 40). What passed for opium was evidently often not genuine, since Pliny mentions several tests: the unbearable odor of pure opium, the clear flame produced by burning and its long-lasting smell after the pellet was extinguished, its buoyancy and cloudy appearance in water, and its sweating and melting on exposure to sunlight (XX, 18, 203). *Lycium*, a kind of thorn from which the extract was used medicinally, could be diluted with bitter juices, wine-lees, or ox-gall (XXIV, 14, 125). Of saffron, valuable as both dye and drug, the writer observes in general terms *Adulteratur nihil aequae*, adding that the true article crackled when pressed in one's palm and produced a biting, tingling sensation when held close to eyes and face (XXI, 6, 32).

*Favilla salis*, salt powder or ash, used by perfumers for coloring, was imitated by red-earth or ground-up potsherds, but these alien elements were soluble in water, salt powder only in oil (XXXI, 8, 91). Goat's blood or finely ground sorb-apples were employed to 'stretch' vermilion, *cinnabaris* (XXXIII, 7, 117).

Even metals, metal salts, and minerals were not safe from the counterfeiter's arts. Nitre was adulterated with lime, which, however, altered both taste and smell (XXXI, 10, 114). In gilding bronze, smiths ordinarily used quicksilver to attach the gold-leaf, but since the mercury was transparent and revealed the thickness of the sheets, white of egg was a safer adhesive for workmen who skimmed on precious materials (XXXIII, 6, 100). *Stannum* (or *stagnum*), an alloy of silver and lead, could be debased by substitution of light bronze (*candidum aes*) or tin for the silver content (XXXIV, 17, 160). Pitch was frequently added to bitumen; the expert relied on gloss and weight as criteria of genuineness (XXXV, 15, 180).

Amber is referred to, in connection with 'paste' gems, as employed for copying the appearance of translucent stones, especially amethysts, which display a great range of color (XXXVII, 3, 51). Dull-colored carbuncles, Pliny reveals, were given an artificial lustre for a limited time by being immersed for two weeks in vinegar, or by treatment like that given to glass; he terms the mark of good stones their hardness, determined by grinding on an emery-wheel (XXXVII, 7, 98). Sapphires were frequently dyed to increase their brilliance (XXXVII, 9, 119).

More exhaustive search would doubtless lengthen the list of deceptions, but the present enumeration is, I think, sufficiently extensive to show that a perusal of Pliny's work may help to offset pessimism about the integrity of modern advertising and business ethics. It also may serve to indicate that quite apart from its principal aims, the *Natural History* rather frequently provided information of the sort now furnished by Better Business bulletins or consumers' guides.

Europe has already lost the bond of a common religion [sixteenth century]; it now lost its common language [seventeenth century]; and it has been suffering ever since from the lack of that unity which one religion and one language gave.—*Wright and Sinclair*.

### Isocrates and Education for Political Leadership

By CHARLES T. MURPHY  
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In view of the current debate over the meaning and purpose of a liberal education, it seems *à propos* to revive and re-examine the subject of the nature of Isocrates' educational program, especially as it reflects the spirit of what he calls his 'philosophy.' The meaning of this word in Isocrates is generally supposed to be something like the pursuit of a general education, or 'culture' in its broadest sense. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest that the term may mean something much more specific.

The debacle of the Athenian democracy at the end of the fifth century revealed clearly the need for a re-examination of the methods and ends of education. In large measure the disastrous defeat of Athens could be ascribed to the failure of the democratic system to produce a succession of able and trustworthy leaders after the death of Pericles. The claim of the older Sophists to teach political ἀρετή—that is, the excellence appropriate to a man participating in the public life of a Greek polis—had not been substantiated by the events. Plato presents the problem vividly in a striking passage of the *Protagoras* (318d-320c): in reply to Protagoras' promise to teach his students the 'political art' and to make them good citizens, Socrates objects that he very much doubts if this subject can be taught or communicated at all. In the course of his argument he points out that even the great Pericles was unable to pass on his political wisdom to his own sons, and that many other cases could be cited to show that good men (i.e., good citizens) cannot impart their virtue to others. Again, in the *Meno*, the same argument is used (93-94), where the names of Themistocles, Aristides, and Thucydides the son of Melesias, all representatives of the older generation of statesmen, are joined to that of Pericles: all were unable to make their sons better than average citizens in 'political virtue.' Nor is the Sophists' claim to teach 'virtue' any better grounded; in fact, they are very often forced to sue the very pupils whom they have made 'virtuous' for unjustly withholding their tuition fees (*Gorgias* 519). The question then is: what form of education will produce political virtue, or citizens capable of initiating or judging policies correctly and directing the state properly? The magnificent answer which Plato gave in his *Republic* has stirred men's imaginations ever since, but it has often been forgotten that Isocrates, in a different way, was seeking a solution to the same problem.

To Isocrates, as to the older Sophists, *sophia* was a broad term: it included all the skills necessary for living one's life well in the Greek polis. To be more specific, it consists of 'correct thought,' 'correct speech,' and 'virtuous and successful activity.' The pursuit of these ideals, whether by teacher or student, might properly be called 'philosophy.' To restrict philosophy to logic or 'eristic' (Isocrates makes no distinction between these two fields), astronomy, and physical speculation and the like, seemed to him a misuse of the term. "In my opinion, we should not give the name of philosophy to something which affords no immediate aid to speech and action" (XV. 266). Such subjects are valuable for mental



discipline (an unpopular idea in these enlightened modern times, but one about which Isocrates, a highly successful teacher, had no doubts whatsoever; cf. XI. 23) and as a preparation for the genuine, or Isocratean, brand of philosophy. He sarcastically observes that some of those who have devoted a lifetime of study to such branches of learning do not use their knowledge intelligently, and in many activities of life show themselves more stupid than their pupils, not to say their own slaves (XII. 28). In short, the criterion for true philosophy is that it shall be of some immediate and practical value for living well; and in an oft-cited passage (X. 4-5) Isocrates challenges the other sophists to give up their instruction in logical hair-splitting and metaphysical claptrap in order to teach their students something about the life we must lead in our communities, "reflecting that it is better to hold a reasonable opinion about something useful than to have exact knowledge about something quite useless." As a matter of fact, Isocrates did not believe it possible to attain exact knowledge about ethical matters or in human activities (cf. XV. 271); in this view he is in the sharpest contrast to Plato, to whom a political 'science' was possible and necessary.

There would be, however, little point in repeating these well-known Isocratean animadversions on speculative philosophy if there were no new evidence on the nature of Isocrates' own brand of philosophy. A recent dissertation by Dr. Hans Wersdörfer, S.J., (*Die Philosophie des Isokrates im Spiegel ihrer Terminologie*, Leipzig, 1940) undertakes to re-examine this topic in the light of Isocrates' use of several words which may be considered as the technical terminology of his educational philosophy. The words which Wersdörfer chooses as of special significance are πρέπον, 'the fitting'; καινόν, 'novelty, originality'; ιδέα, 'idea, figure, device'; and καιρός, 'right amount, right time or favorable circumstances, due proportion.' Each word is accompanied by a number of synonymous or related expressions.

The concept of *prepon*, 'appropriateness,' appears in Isocrates as a guide in the arts of life and of speech, leading to the goal of the orator, "to make his speech worthy of its subject." As for the word *kainon*, it is sufficient to note that, contrary to common belief, Isocrates demanded a goodly measure of originality from an orator, particularly in epideictic, or 'show' speeches.

*Idéa* and its synonym *eidos* are used in a variety of meanings, mostly in rhetorical contexts, where they connote both the general methods of handling one's subject and the special techniques of style, use of commonplaces, and all the rest of the orator's stock in trade. On the ethical side, the word seems to mean 'quality, particular essence or virtue of a thing,' but it is noteworthy that where *idéa* is so used the technical rhetorical meaning lurks in the background; thus it is suggested that the *idéai* are elements of thought, 'points of view,' which direct a man toward excellence in speech and action. We are here approaching the most characteristic doctrine of Isocrates' philosophy: the art of living well and the art of speaking well, ethics and rhetoric, are inseparably connected.

This connection becomes more apparent through a study of his use of the term *kairos* and its many related expressions. On the ethical side it often means the

Golden Mean, the avoidance of all extremes, with the characteristic Attic caution that the mean lies nearer the too little than the too much; in rhetoric it applies to the length of the speech, and length and appropriateness of the parts to the whole speech and its aim. Again, the principle of *kairos* dictates the right amount for both speech and action, especially in the political sphere. The principle of 'due proportion and timeliness' lies at the basis of Isocrates' ethical and rhetorical philosophy. Yet here we find a fundamental difficulty in Isocrates' educational doctrines: while it is easy enough to teach a student all the different elements of correct speech and action, the principle of *kairos*, which governs the use of these elements, is not a matter of exact knowledge at all and hence cannot be imparted through theoretical instruction. In rhetoric we may teach a student all the devices of style, all the methods of argumentation, and a number of useful commonplaces, and yet leave him ignorant of when and how to use them effectively in a particular speech. Similarly, in life, a man may possess all the qualities and refinements of a virtuous gentleman, and still fail to regulate his conduct tactfully and with regard to the particular circumstances in which he finds himself.

In a famous description of the wise man and philosopher (XV. 271), Isocrates says: "Since it is not in the nature of man to attain to a knowledge by which we may know what must be said or done on each occasion, I consider those men truly wise who by means of good judgment (*doxa*) can generally hit upon the best course." This idea that the *kairoi*—i.e., the right things to say and do at the right time—can be discovered only through conjecture, aided by tact and a fine sense of judgment, is stressed many times. In an arresting phrase Isocrates calls this quality of good judgment δόξα ἐπιτυχῆς τῶν καίρων (XII. 30), and elsewhere characterizes the man who can attain to this as a ψυχὴ δοξαστική (XIII. 17). Furthermore, there remains a large element of uncertainty in the processes of judgment: Isocrates frequently qualifies his phrases referring to the man 'who is able to hit upon what is best' with the cautious qualification, 'generally,' 'for the most part.'

Accordingly, Isocrates maintains that neither he nor any other teacher can infallibly turn his students into polished orators or liberally educated men. The student must contribute a natural aptitude for learning and speaking. The teacher can then instruct him in the theoretical principles and elements (i.e., the *idéai*) of the arts of speech and life; theoretical instruction is a poor third in importance in the educational trinity of nature, practice, and instruction. The final goal, the production of the type of mind that can usually hit upon the right things to do and say at the right time and in the right proportion, is attained through the close and fruitful contact of a naturally gifted pupil with an inspiring teacher, who is able to offer himself as an example of correct speech and action, with the student exercising himself in the composition of actual speeches under the guidance of the teacher, and the teacher submitting his own productions as models for the student. This latter method was, of course, the practice of the older Sophists; Isocrates differs from them chiefly in his emphasis on the industry of the student. At any rate, Isocrates puts the burden of education squarely on the

teacher and the student, not on the system; and his requirements for a good teacher should prompt a little soul-searching in the most complacent among us, the Ph.D. as well as the B.S. in Ed. For a liberal education, he insists, is the fruit of an association with gifted and noble teachers, not the product of a particular arrangement of courses and prerequisites. Isocrates did not, however, underrate the value of the broad type of education which strives to build the future on the solid foundations of the past. "You must not only observe what I say, but also learn the best of the poets and read whatever of value has been said by the other philosophers. For as the bee settles on every blossom, and takes the best from each, so those who seek a liberal education should try many subjects and collect what is useful from all." (I. 51.) So Isocrates wrote to his young friend, Demonicius, and we need not doubt that his students in Athens received similar advice.

Thus the fine tact and good judgment which enables a man to seize upon the *kairoi*—the fundamental point in the Isocratean philosophy—is the result of careful training and exercise in speaking plus the reading of poets and philosophers. More specifically, Isocrates' philosophy is centered or focused on τὸ εὖ λέγειν, speaking well. What seem to us to be the more important aspects of philosophy, correct thought and action, come (in Isocrates' view) naturally as the accompaniment of correct speech. The discipline of arranging one's thoughts in logical order and expressing them clearly and elegantly, without doubt leads to clarity of thought and increased understanding, so that Isocrates has considerable justification for his claim (XV. 255) that to speak properly is the clearest mark of a good intelligence and "speech that is true, lawful, and just is an image of a good and loyal soul." Just how the central rhetorical training leads to correct, virtuous action is not so easy to demonstrate. At times Isocrates speaks as if the main incentive for virtue which his students received from their rhetorical training was the desire for a good report among men—the reputation of a good and loyal citizen, which makes a speech to one's fellow-citizens more persuasive (XV. 278 ff.). Besides this, Isocrates gave direct moral instruction in his hortatory essays and in his lectures; and he also argues that the pursuit of political oratory in its best aspects helps to encourage and train men for virtuous activity (XIII. 21). For the tact and judgment in choosing the noblest examples and the most fitting arguments in composing a speech will have the same power in other activities as well (XV. 277). In short, the *kairoi* in both speaking and living well are found by the same faculty of mind—a faculty which is best developed by rhetoric.

Whatever doubts we moderns, with our distrust of rhetoric, may feel about the value of such an education, Isocrates himself was firmly convinced that his training, based on oratory as the essential introduction to life in the Greek *polis*, really did provide an answer to the needs of the fourth century by securing for the city-states an intelligent and morally enlightened leadership. With pardonable vanity he points to the numbers and successes of his pupils and associates, many of whom had been honored by Athens for distinguished services. And on the whole, the testimony of antiquity supports him; his school was (in Cicero's phrase) the Trojan Horse, from which *meri principes* emerged—the leading

orators, statesmen, and writers of the day. And not the least important of the witnesses is Cicero: in the troubled last days of the Roman Republic Cicero sketched the ideal figure who would unite in one person orator, statesman, and philosopher—a man like his own idealized portrait of Scipio, to be the true *rector, moderator*, and leader of the Republic; and it is the Isocratean conception of philosophy of which he is thinking, as Professor Hubbell pointed out a good many years ago in his dissertation, *The Influence of Isocrates on Cicero, Dionysius, and Aristides* (New Haven, 1913). Throughout the *De Oratore* Cicero argues (1) that the orator's province is the widest possible one, embracing politics, law, philosophy, and all other branches of the curriculum; and (2) that rhetoric alone without philosophy is an insufficient training for public life. Yet in philosophy Cicero is willing to omit the study of physical speculation and logic (*naturae obscuritas* and *disserendi subtilitas* as he calls them, with a certain minimizing tone) and concentrate in *vitam atque mores* (*de Or.* I. 68). The two former branches of philosophy were exactly the ones which Isocrates ridiculed, as we have seen. To Cicero, as to Isocrates, philosophy is the teacher *et recte faciendi et bene dicendi* (*de Or.* III. 58): this close union of rhetoric and ethics, under the comprehensive name of philosophy, seemed to Cicero to offer the best education for those who proposed to serve the Republic as public-spirited citizens and as statesmen. Cicero himself is, of course, the finest example of the results of such an education: the loftiness and moral fervor of his best public speeches could never have come from a mere partisan politician, but only from a man whose wide knowledge and deep penetration entitled him to feel that he had devoted himself to philosophy.

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